

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Bellamy and City Council

DATE: 7-9-08

VIA: Gary Jackson, City Manager

FROM: Sasha Vrtunski, AICP

SUBJECT: Update on Downtown Master Plan process

I would like to update you on the progress of the Downtown Master Plan process.

June 12 Public Meeting - Draft Vision and Principles

At the June 12 meeting, about 160 people came to hear about the draft principles and vision. After the presentation, folks split into three groups to discuss and give feedback on the concepts. Generally, the feedback was positive, with many folks giving ideas for some more of the details that they would like to see as a part of the plan.

During this visit, the consultants also met with a group of business people at the Chamber of Commerce. This was a very helpful meeting for the planning team, as they heard from some folks who had not come to the public meetings yet.

July Meetings - Draft Strategies

For their next visit, the team will be bringing draft strategies for community feedback. They have grouped a set of goals under three major actions: Enriching Downtown Asheville, Experiencing Downtown Asheville and Shaping Asheville. Over the next two weeks, the consultants will be developing strategies under each topic.

Enriching Downtown Asheville will focus on strategies related to nurturing a sustainable and resilient downtown economy, including many redevelopment possibilities and options as well as a management structure for downtown. *Experiencing Downtown Asheville* focuses on improving how people experience downtown – how to preserve and enhance our downtown’s historic and cultural resources, downtown circulation and downtown parking convenience. Lastly, *Shaping Downtown Asheville* centers around to how our downtown develops in the future – an urban design framework; new ideas for the development review process; an updated design review procedure; sustainable building standards, etc

I am attaching a schedule of public meetings for the July 28-29 visit. We are holding meetings on each of the three areas where folks can come discuss those particular areas. We are also having a meeting to discuss the needs of the African American community as it relates to downtown, and we are also having a meeting with downtown business owners. These are the two specific groups that the Advisory Committee has

identified as needing more outreach. The consultant team will also be meeting with staff, City Council members and specific stakeholders groups as appropriate.

Fall Schedule

After the meetings in July, the consultants will take the feedback they've gotten and begin putting together the draft plan. We anticipate that the draft plan will be reviewed by the Downtown Commission, the PED committee and then City Council in a work session on September 16. A public meeting to review the draft plan will happen on Thursday, September 18. Currently we are on-track to come to City Council with the final plan in October.

As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Schedule of Upcoming Public Meetings

* All meetings are at the Asheville Public Works Building, 161 S. Charlotte Street, with the exception of the evening meeting at the Asheville Civic Center on Tuesday, July 29

All meetings are open to the public

MONDAY, JULY 28

Strategy Workshop 1: Experiencing Downtown Asheville

1:00 – 3:00 pm

Please join us to discuss strategies focused on improving how people experience downtown – how to preserve and enhance our downtown’s historic and cultural resources, downtown circulation and downtown parking convenience.

Community Open House

6:00 – 8:30 pm

Join us for a special conversation to discuss the needs of the African-American community.

What needs to be in place to make downtown work – and work better – for you? Come meet with the planning team and tell us what you think. We need your input!

TUESDAY, JULY 29

Downtown Business Owners Meeting

8:00 am – 10 am

The downtown business community is invited to meet and exchange ideas with the planning team.

This session will focus on the needs of the business community and business improvement strategies being developed for the master plan.

Strategy Workshop 2: Shaping Downtown Asheville

10:00 – 12:00

Join us for a discussion on strategies related to how our downtown develops in the future – an urban design framework; new ideas for the development review process; an updated design review procedure; sustainable building standards, etc. We need your input.

Strategy Workshop 3: Enriching Downtown Asheville

1:00-3:00pm

In this session, we focus on strategies related to nurturing a sustainable and resilient downtown economy, including many redevelopment possibilities and options as well as a management structure for downtown.

General Meeting: Strategies for a Vibrant Downtown Asheville

Asheville Civic Center

6:00 – 9:00 pm

Join us for a review of the strategies suggested by the planning team, as well as comments and ideas generated through the above workshops and community input meetings. There will be presentations and discussions, questions and answers, and ideas for a draft downtown master plan. We need your help and value your time and input.